



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2004

TUNEFUL V CORPS SOLDIERS JOIN WITH RESERVE COUNTERPARTS FOR GOSPEL CONCERT IN TIKRIT

By Capt. L. Paula Sydenstricker
196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq – The voices of the Tikrit Gospel Fellowship Choir, could be heard from afar as they serenaded their comrades in uniform at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center chapel here. The performers -- active duty, Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers -- come from all walks of life and different musical backgrounds, denominations and races. But it didn't matter.



CAPT L. PAULA SYDENSTRICKER
Spc. Johnathan Ross and Pfc. Cadavious Summerall of V Corps' Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 121st Signal Battalion perform a dance number during a concert by the Tikrit Gospel Fellowship Choir.

The Voices of Praise, as the choir is called, put on a head-bobbing, toe-tapping concert titled, "A Symphonic Testimony." The performance was dedicated to all deployed Soldiers here, as a tribute to the troops' mission and to the choir members' efforts the past year, concert organizers said.

"We put together several songs that were devised to tell a story of how we were able to

persevere throughout this deployment," said Warrant Officer Drayton Gilyard, pastor of the Tikrit Gospel Fellowship and a member of V Corps' Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 121st Signal Battalion.

Gilyard is a native of Orangeburg, S.C. who was ordained in September 2003.

The concert included a spiritual dance routine by Gilyard and solos by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Mike Lembke, the 1st Infantry Division chaplain, and Sgt. 1st Class Donald Hogans, head of TGF's music ministry and a member of Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 58th Aviation.

The 35-member choir started practicing for the concert in early September, in addition to preparing for its weekly performances during Sunday morning church services. Planning regular and extra practices around the members' duty schedules proved to be challenging, Hogans said.

"This was the tough part, between people going on leave, going to other base camps, and just normal duties," he said.

After his choir's performance, Gilyard said he hoped the music would inspire Soldiers as they battle insurgents here.

"The music can talk to the people," said Gilyard, pastor of Bethel Christian World Outreach Ministries in Germany. "In the Bible before the Israelites went to fight, they sent their singers."

